

The Case for JPME Phase Zero

Building a Joint Culture in the U.S. Navy

By DAVID K. RICHARDSON

In the two decades since the landmark Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DOD) Reorganization Act of 1986, each military Service has charted a different course in implementing joint concepts within its respective culture. One of the most significant challenges created by Goldwater-Nichols was the need to expand joint professional military education (JPME) programs. The Services, charged with educating and training their officer corps in both Service-specific *and* joint matters, continue to struggle with this crucial task of developing the “total officer.” This is especially true for the U.S. Navy.

Congressman Ike Skelton (D-MO) observed over a decade ago that the Navy is the “service that traditionally has been most resistant to change.”¹ From not sending its best officers to war colleges, to emphasizing Navy-centric and command tours over joint qualifications, the Navy certainly does not have the

best track record of setting a joint course over the last 20 years. That said, the current Navy leadership has openly admitted that a change is needed to address the importance of jointness. In his March 2007 statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, then-Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Mike Mullen stated, “Our path is designed to create a change in Navy culture so that it values jointness and therefore systematically develops a group of Navy leaders who are strategically minded, capable of critical thinking, and skilled in naval and joint warfare.”²

Changing a culture is a tough and nebulous endeavor. It no doubt requires patience and, in the words of Peter Schwartz, the “art of the long view.” Today, changes in joint requirements and education are ongoing as all the Services implement the Vision for Joint Officer Development set forth in November 2005 by then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace. It is in this climate, ripe

for change and innovation, that the Navy finds itself with a unique opportunity to change its culture and firmly center itself on the joint path.

The key question then becomes how the Navy makes this course change with the long view in sight. This article proposes the creation of a new phase of joint professional military education: JPME Phase Zero. This new program, a combination of formal classroom instruction and summer training, will ensure every naval officer is educated in basic joint matters prior to commissioning. By aggressively instituting JPME Phase Zero in the next few years, the Navy can change its culture to value jointness from the ground up and establish itself as *the* model Service in joint education and officer development.

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CDR Dave Adams, USN, takes command of Provincial Reconstruction Team Khost at Forward Operating Base Chapman

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A Long and Unhappy Engagement

What an organization does every day matters. In a very basic sense, daily tasks play a large role over time in defining a culture. The Navy has always had a strong culture that clearly sets it apart from the other Services. This culture has been shaped by the Navy's unique operating environment and traditional values such as independent action and initiative.³

Over the last two centuries, the Navy's culture of independence has emerged as a result of forces that are arguably diametrically opposed to the concept of jointness. While the other Services tend to train and fight as teams of combined arms to accomplish missions on land, the Navy throughout its history has spent significant time operating independently in the middle of vast oceans. In naval terms, joint operations often meant working with another ship or within a task force at sea. In many cases, integration with forces from other Services did not occur until ships operated near land. Until recently, this integration was hardly considered an operational way of life for ships outside the amphibious warfare community.

On top of this fact, parochialism has always played a major role in the evolution of joint relationships. Services not working together or trusting each other can negatively impact operations. Service cooperation perhaps reached a low point in 1899 in the Philippines, when Navy Commodore George Dewey "went so far as to warn General Otis, U.S. Army Commander in the Philippines, that he planned to

sink the U.S. Army's three river gunboats operating on the Pasig River if they entered Dewey's zone of influence a second time."⁴

This is not to say that the Navy has always operated alone and far out to sea with no regard to others. To be fair, at certain important points in its history, the Navy emerged as a model of joint cooperation. Throughout World War II in the Pacific, and again in Korea, Navy operational commanders and staffs displayed a high level of proficiency in joint operations. This expertise, resident in the Navy's amphibious warfare community, reached its apex in the 1940s and early 1950s with the highly successful island hopping campaign and the amphibious landing at Inchon.⁵

Unfortunately, with the emergence of the Cold War, this expertise took a back seat and remained dormant for decades. The resultant Navy culture in the 1980s had a tough time adjusting to sweeping changes in the joint world. The watershed event in this process occurred with the fight over the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. Although every Service argued against its passage, the Navy's reaction was particularly vehement. Secretary of the Navy John Lehman argued that the act would destroy the core strengths of the American military establishment.⁶ And in a telling episode, the Navy set up a "crisis management center," the "purported mission" of which "was to defeat the [Goldwater-Nichols] legislation, an activity of questionable legality."⁷

Since the end of the Goldwater-Nichols fight, the Navy's position has strongly supported the concept of the joint force. In practice, however, it has taken a long time to integrate policies that support this public stance. This is particularly true with regard to personnel policies that impact joint education and joint qualification. The history of the Naval War College, the Navy's premier institution for educating naval officers in joint matters, clearly highlights this fact. Twelve years after Goldwater-Nichols, an article in *Joint Force Quarterly* painted a grim picture when it reported that

the Navy's culture of independence has emerged as a result of forces that are arguably diametrically opposed to the concept of jointness

"naval colleges still suffer from the conviction of their leaders that their best and brightest have no time to attend . . . it sends few of its top officers to its own war college."⁸

In writing about the Navy in the century before World War II, retired Vice Admiral James Calvert observed that "the marriage of American industrial power and the Navy was preceded by a long and fitfully unhappy engagement; we were slow in developing the steel-and-steam warship in our Navy."⁹ The dramatic culture shift from sail to steam took a long time to work itself out, but in the end, American industrial might produced the naval forces that destroyed the Japanese fleet and won the war in the Pacific. The Navy's culture at the time, cemented in tradition, finally embraced the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution and emerged as the world's premier naval force.

The culture shift that joint warfare represents to the modern Navy is no less significant than the shift from sail to steam. There are indications in the last few years that the Navy's "long and unhappy engagement" with the joint world that began with Goldwater-Nichols has turned a corner. A prime example of this shift is the surface warfare community's recent overhaul of the officer career pipeline. This dramatic change, a policy called "XO-CO Fleet Up," allows for more flexibility in joint education and completion of multiple joint tours. Aligned with the Joint Staff's 2005 Vision for Joint Officer Development, this new career path ensures that surface warfare officers "are

Airmen and Sailors from USNS *Comfort* visit students in Guyana



U.S. Navy (Elizabeth R. Allen)

better able to excel in the joint arena while meeting all career milestones.”¹⁰

The bottom line behind this overhaul was that the surface warfare community was consistently failing to meet its quota of senior representation on joint and combatant commander staffs. This situation developed due to many years of neglect with respect to joint officer development. Eventually, something had to be done to correct the shortfall. While the recent shift in policy is a step in the right direction, it will be years before this initiative bears fruit and corrects this portion of the joint manning deficiency.

In many ways, this corrective action illustrates the reactive nature of the Navy’s leadership in addressing shortcomings in the joint world. More importantly, the example involving the surface force is only one part of a larger “joint marriage” involving the entire Service. The Navy has come a long way since Commodore Dewey’s words to General Otis over a century ago, but there is still a long way to go.

No Officer Left Behind

It is important to understand that the issue of joint professional military education is only part of a larger and very complex framework. Each Service must develop its officers through Service-specific professional military education, in addition to the requirements for JPME. In the 2005 *CJCS Vision for Joint Officer Development*, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated that the Services “must mentor all officers toward the Joint Officer Development objective . . . [and] the Services must develop a no-officer-left-behind attitude.”¹¹ To achieve this vision, the crucial task of integrating professional military education (PME) with JPME presents a significant challenge.

Leaving it to each Service to address Service-specific PME, the Joint Staff has aggressively coordinated and improved cohesion among the various formalized JPME programs. A cornerstone of this effort is the Military Education Coordination Council (MECC), which is chaired by the Director of the Joint Staff. Meeting annually with representatives from every JPME institution, the purpose of the council is “to address key educational issues of interest to the joint education community, promote cooperation and collaboration among the MECC member institutions, and coordinate joint education initiatives.”¹²

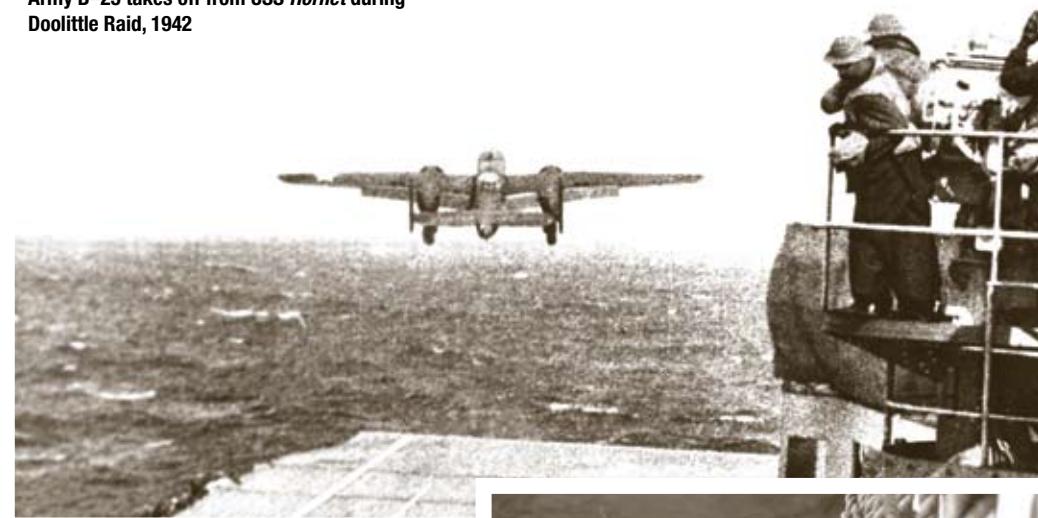
In addition to the MECC, the Joint Staff oversees the formal Process for Accreditation of Joint Education (PAJE), during which teams

visit all JPME institutions on a periodic basis for inspection and assessment. Reporting directly to the Chairman, the PAJE serves as the accreditation authority and plays a critical

leaving it to each Service to address Service-specific PME, the Joint Staff has aggressively coordinated and improved cohesion among the formalized JPME programs

role in ensuring that joint education is standardized across various joint educational institutions. The PAJE, coupled with the MECC process, has made significant strides in the last

Army B-25 takes off from USS *Hornet* during Doolittle Raid, 1942



decade in strengthening the JPME Phase I and II programs and the institutions that administer to them. Due to this focus and aggressive oversight by the Joint Staff, joint education as a whole has improved substantially since Goldwater-Nichols.

However, the JPME Phase I and II programs focus only on intermediate- and senior-level joint education. The intermediate phase focuses on majors and lieutenant commanders with over 10 years of commissioned service. The senior level phase focuses on officers with over 15 years of service. Strengthening the intermediate and senior levels of JPME education is vital to educating the joint force, but this only goes so far. Many would argue that it leaves out the most important part of joint education—the portion received in the first half of an officer’s career.

In describing the vision of a “continuum of joint education,” the Joint Chiefs instruction states that “officers receive JPME from pre-commissioning through the general/flag officer level.”¹³ This policy implements the finding of a previous Joint Staff effort in 1998, called JPME 2010. The JPME 2010 requirements team “confirmed that a seamless, flexible JPME system is needed for officers from pre-commissioning to the general/flag level.”¹⁴ The problem is that although we are over 20 years removed from Goldwater-Nichols, this vision is not yet a reality.

Describing the importance of getting lifelong joint education right, the *CJCS Vision for Joint Officer Development* suggests that “schoolhouses are the petri dishes for organizational culture.”¹⁵ To this point in time, the



Soldiers board landing craft during Inchon invasion, January 9, 1953

Chairman has left the implementation of the first two phases of the joint education continuum, the precommissioning phase and the primary phase, up to the Services. Except for a report by each Service chief to the Chairman every 3 years describing the nature of these programs, no oversight or inspection of this level of joint education is conducted. These programs are not standardized across the Services. Furthermore, they are not included in either the MECC or PAJE process.

This lack of attention to initial joint education is surprising because it allows joint culture to begin to grow in Service-specific “petri dishes” without the same rigorous oversight given to the dish 10 years down the road. It is time for this to change.



Former Secretary of Navy John F. Lehman opposed Goldwater-Nichols Act legislation

Establish Navy-wide JPME Phase Zero for all naval officers during the precommissioning phase of training. JPME Phase Zero will fill the current void in the precommissioning and primary levels of joint education and, in the process, build the foundation for all future JPME. Simply put, it will set the stage for and enhance JPME Phase I and II programs currently in place. The goal of Phase Zero is

JPME Phase Zero will teach midshipmen the basics of joint warfare to give them a framework on which to build throughout their careers

not to create joint qualified officers at commissioning, but simply to meet the Chairman’s vision of the endstate of the precommissioning and primary phases of JPME. Stressing the basics only, this includes “an introduction to their respective Service . . . knowledge of the basic U.S. defense structure, roles and missions of other Military Services, the combatant command structure . . . and the nature of American military power and joint warfare.”¹⁷

To achieve this endstate, the proposal for JPME Phase Zero consists of the following programs:

Joint Military Operations (JMO) basic course of instruction. In the spirit of the JMO course currently taught at the Naval War College for JPME Phase I, it is proposed that this course be taught in the second-class (junior) year for all midshipmen. This basic instruction could be structured as a 3-hour class with no lab time (3–0–3). The objective for this formalized course will be to teach midshipmen the basics of joint warfare to give them a framework on which to build throughout their careers. It will fulfill all joint learning areas and objectives for precommissioning level and primary-level programs as outlined in the Officer Professional Military Education Policy (CJCSI 1800.01C). Textbooks would include *The Armed Forces Officer*; Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*; and Joint Publication 0–2, *Unified Action Armed Forces*.

Joint midsummer training. Classroom instruction can only go so far. Summer training, where midshipmen visit the fleet and get hands-on experience, “provides some of the most enjoyable, most professionally enriching, most memorable experiences at the Academy.”¹⁸ Building on the current Professional Training

for Midshipmen program, where midshipmen spend 1 week with each warfare specialty before their junior year (naval aviation, submarines, Marines), a new program called Joint-MID could expose midshipmen to a joint warfare command (U.S. Joint Forces Command, U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Strategic Command, U.S. Central Command, and so forth) for 2 weeks during their first-class (senior) summer. This summer experience should be structured to give midshipmen a first-hand appreciation for current challenges in the joint world, as well as a reinforcement of the concepts presented in the JMO course of instruction they received the previous academic year.

Create a JMO Department at the Naval Academy. To execute and teach JPME Phase Zero, a new JMO Department should be created and staffed by a joint faculty. Smaller but similar in construct to current war college faculties, the staff should include instructors from all the Services who are senior officers with considerable joint experience. Staffing this department would undoubtedly be a significant challenge, but several options are available.

As many have observed, “It has taken nearly a generation to grow a cadre of joint officers and a body of joint knowledge.”¹⁹ But after 20 years of the Goldwater-Nichols joint force, that knowledge and experience do exist. Faculty in this department should be a mix of retired and Active duty personnel. Active duty officers on the JMO Department faculty should be incorporated into the Navy’s current Permanent Military Professor program to ensure the longevity and consistency of instructors. Finally, the chairman of this department should be an officer of significant stature. This could take the form of a distinguished chair and could be a retired flag or general officer with the experience of multiple joint commands.

The new JMO Department at the Naval Academy should fall under the Division of Professional Development in Luce Hall (see figure). This would place the department in the same academic division as the Department of Professional Programs, which coordinates midshipman summer training programs and service assignments. This would allow fluid coordination between the JMO basic academic course taught by the faculty and the Joint-MID summer program to be executed by the Department of Professional Programs. A cadre of JMO faculty should liaison directly with Professional Programs to lead the Joint-MID summer program.

With JPME Phase Zero set up in this manner, the Naval Academy’s JMO Department

could execute JPME Phase Zero for Officer Candidate School (OCS)/Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) graduates as well. Most naval officers are commissioned through these two programs, so developing a program that does not include these officers makes little sense. Therefore, it is proposed that all OCS/NROTC graduates spend 1 month in temporary duty at the Naval Academy in the summer immediately following their commissioning and prior to reporting to their first duty station.

In an intense summer school experience taught by the JMO faculty, these new officers will receive instruction in the JMO basic course while living on the Naval Academy grounds. During the summer months, several wings of the Naval Academy's dormitory, Bancroft Hall, are left vacant as midshipmen participate in summer programs. The cost savings of berthing and messing OCS/NROTC officers at the academy is an obvious advantage to this proposal. Additionally, by living in Bancroft Hall and receiving in-residence instruction at the Naval Academy, all commissioned officers would receive the same standardized training prior to reporting to the Fleet. This program could create a bond between every naval officer and the institution that is the "soul of the United States Navy."

Once established, include Naval Academy JPME Phase Zero leadership in the MECC process. The Navy's JPME Phase Zero program should be integrated into the existing MECC process. The Joint Staff's Officer

Professional Military Education Policy should be modified to include the Chairman of the Naval Academy's Joint Military Operations Department in the MECC Principals and MECC Working Group. This would finally align the precommissioning and primary levels of joint education with the other phases of joint education and bring them firmly under one umbrella. As the Naval Academy model is expanded to other Service academies, the MECC process would strengthen JPME Phase Zero across the entire military establishment as has been done for Phase I and II programs.

Expand the PAJE charter to include JPME Phase Zero. The Navy's JPME Phase Zero program should be integrated into the Joint Staff's PAJE process to ensure that this pilot program is given the proper oversight and is aligned fully with the Chairman's vision. Creating a program that simply "checks the box" would, in the end, do more harm than good. Therefore, it is imperative that initial certification and accreditation be rigorous. Lessons learned must be properly documented for future application in the potential expansion of the program to other Service academies. Implementation and certification of the Navy's JPME Phase Zero program should occur no later than 2012. Accreditation should occur no later than 2014.

Zero Sum Game

The creation of a JPME Phase Zero program in the Navy has many advantages.

First and foremost, it aggressively pursues the vision of developing joint officers by attempting to get out in front on the issue of early joint education. A second strength of the proposal is that it standardizes the first joint exposure and initial joint education of all naval officers. This program could reap huge benefits down the line, lay the positive foundation for a Service-wide joint culture, and enhance JPME Phase I and II education. But the opposite is also true, and there are many arguments for why this program would simply not work as proposed.

Congressman Skelton observed that "service expertise comes first" and that "finding time for both service and joint training is difficult."²⁰ This is no doubt the case. Tactical proficiency and Service-specific knowledge are vital building blocks to understanding joint concepts. Taking this one step further, the argument can easily be made that joint education does not make sense at all until basic tactical proficiency is achieved.

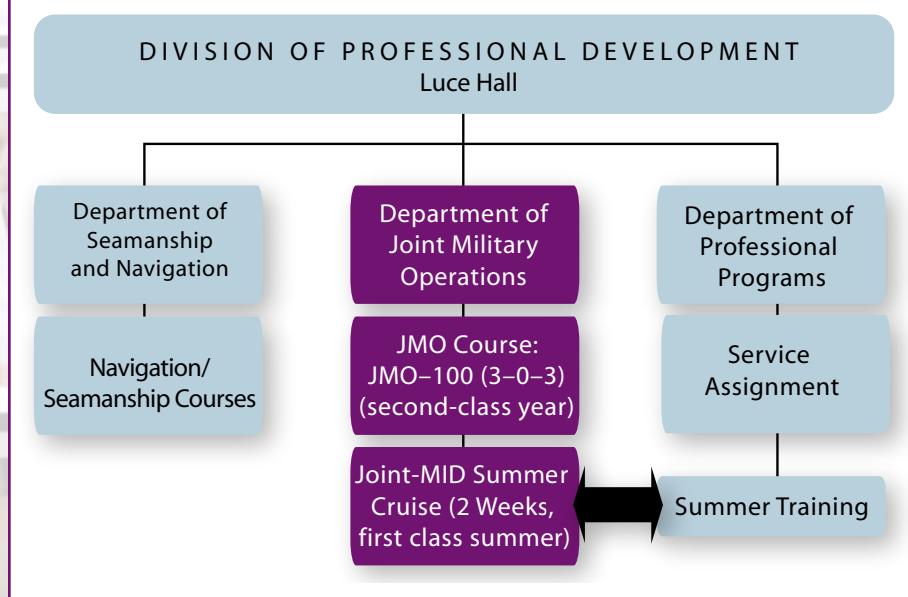
In addition to the issue of tactical proficiency, early training and education are a zero sum game. If JPME Phase Zero is established at the Naval Academy, something over the 4-year program must be removed or modified. This is a contentious subject with passionate arguments on every side. One only has to look at the intense battles in the last 50 years over the Naval Academy's curriculum to see that this is a lightning rod issue.

The case could also be made that the current Naval Academy curriculum does not need to be modified because it already meets the spirit of what is required for joint training. Midshipmen are introduced to the basics of the other Services throughout initial indoctrination, including their ranks, rates, organization, and platforms. This is reinforced during lectures within the curriculum in the Department of Professional Development.

Additionally, joint culture is promoted through the Service Academy Exchange Program (SAEP). Dating back to 1949, SAEP permits a select few midshipmen and cadets from each Service academy to spend an entire semester at another academy as exchange students. This program, intended to increase "the understanding and good relations between the service academies and the four services,"²¹ is a prime example of early promotion of joint culture currently in place.

But does the present level of joint instruction and programs such as SAEP go far enough in building a joint culture within the Navy? The answer can certainly be debated, but two key

JPME Phase Zero and Proposed Naval Academy Joint Military Operations Department



points bring the shortcomings in the current system to light. First, only a handful of midshipmen participate in SAEP, so this hardly qualifies as a program that develops a joint culture for every future naval officer. Second, the current placement and nature of instruction in joint concepts are not comprehensive enough to highlight its importance. A few lectures scattered throughout courses in naval warfare, leadership, seamanship, and navigation cannot possibly impress upon midshipmen the significance of joint warfare and joint education. This is especially true when these lectures are conducted by junior officers with little or no joint experience.

The issues with Naval Academy curriculum instruction aside, there is the predominant belief that early joint education can best be accomplished through less formal means. Even the Chairman's vision discusses a proposal for online distance education via a Joint Learning Portal, the intent of which is to fill the current void and assist junior officers in receiving joint education before they reach JPME Phase I programs as lieutenant commanders and majors.²² The cost savings of this approach alone is hard to discount.

In the end, the determining factor in sorting out these approaches boils down to measures of effectiveness. But measuring the jointness of a culture, and the various effects of certain programs on that culture, is a tough if not impossible task. This could take decades, which we do not have. The time to act is now.

Predisposition to Jointness

The rapidly changing environment in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 world overshadows the arguments against JPME Phase Zero. The military's operating environment is becoming more complex with the addition of various government agencies and nongovernmental organizations working alongside our forces. Calls for an "interagency Goldwater-Nichols Act" are increasing. In this environment, an early grasp of basic joint concepts is more essential than ever for junior officers. Retired Army Lieutenant General Dick Chilcoat, a former President of National Defense University, foreshadowed this fact in 1999: "A strong sense of jointness will be even more important tomorrow. The synchronization of joint combat power is occurring at lower levels—brigades, ships, and squadrons . . . moreover, future military operations will increasingly include the integration of interagency and multi-national participants."²³

Given the increased importance of understanding joint concepts immediately

upon commissioning, early joint education is too important to trust to computer-based methods. The mere notion of junior officers learning about joint warfare and what it means to work *together* in their profession by sitting *alone* at a computer console is, in and of itself, a contradiction. This proposal also goes against lessons learned from decades of JPME Phase I and II instruction at war colleges. Some of the most important parts of joint education lie in the social aspects of the education and the interaction between officers of different Services. Imagine the benefit of having a JPME Phase Zero course taught in a seminar format by an experienced, dynamic, and joint qualified Air Force colonel instead having of midshipmen sitting at their computers in Bancroft Hall flipping through slides with no human interaction.

Numerous studies and articles in the last 20 years have highlighted various issues with educating the joint force in the wake of Goldwater-Nichols. Many experts, including retired Admiral William Owens, have identified shortfalls and urged action in addressing early joint education at Service academies and other precommissioning programs. Extensive studies by renowned think tanks have called for the development of "synergy between service academies and training programs, such as Officer Candidate Schools and the Reserve Officer Training Corps."²⁴ But few of these studies have outlined a detailed plan for achieving this goal. Joint professional military education Phase Zero, beginning with the Navy as the pilot program, does just that.

In the end, Phase Zero will be a small step forward in a much larger journey. Success of this program will not be measured for years to come, and even then it will be hard to quantify. But investment in education is never a mistake. By trusting in the long view, and proactively addressing the shortfall in precommissioning and primary joint education, the Navy can "shift the rudder" on decades of counterproductive and reactive policies. In the process, Phase Zero will give every naval officer a predisposition to jointness, change the Navy's culture from the ground up, and set the course for the lifelong education of the future joint force. **JFQ**

NOTES

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¹⁸ Calvert, 119.

¹⁹ Michael A. Coss, "Joint Professionals: Here Today, Here to Stay," *Joint Force Quarterly* 38 (3rd quarter, 2005), 93.

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